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THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

50¢

Vol. 23 No.1 Spring, 1993

Editorial

Recognize Vietnam Now

Vietnam Veterans Against the War has existed for twenty-six years. For most of us, Vietnam has been the center piece of our lives. Our experiences in the war have defined us.

Seventeen years ago that war ended. The U.S. stopped dropping bombs and firing bullets at the Vietnamese. But the war is still killing us.

We have seen our fellow veterans kill themselves in twice the numbers killed during the war. Farmers are maimed and killed by unexploded ordinance in Vietnam. 300,000 Vietnamese are still missing in action. Children are still being born with birth defects caused by the huge amounts of poison (Agents Orange, etc.) which will remain in the soil of Vietnam for decades. In some provinces the rate of birth defects has reached thirty per-cent.

Fanatics and unrepentant war criminals from Nixon and Kissinger to George Bush still encourage the enforcement of a boycott against Vietnam. The war may be a deadly memory for us, but its a deadly reality for them.

The U.S. recognizes Iran, Lybia, South Africa, Syria, Serbia, etc. These are all countries 'not liked' by the government.

The U.S. has failed to boycott the savagely un-democratic government of China after the Tien-a-mien square massacres. Did we boycott El Salvador after the government there murdered bishops and nuns? Did our self righteous public officials punish Zaire after killing school children? Did they cut off medical supplies and trade with Pakistan, Turkey and Burma after exposures of astronomical drug dealing?

Our 'public servants' and the rich who own them can turn a blind eye to the most despicable, barbaric countries on earth, but balk at even recognizing Vietnam. The Vietnamese taught the world a lesson in self-defence. They paid a great cost to achieve self determination. Their patriots wished to make choices concerning Communism and Capitalism based on Vietnamese opinions, not the prattle of a foreign puppet. This is why the rich are punishing them.

Every means of propaganda has been used to keep the public here confused or taken in by the huxterism of the POW-MIA sideshows. When confronted with the facts, more people here will believe in visits by Space Aliens than living US POWs in Vietnam. This quest has degenerated from fake photos to shameful demands for remains. As if bones, now part of a jungle or under farmland, have a mysterious ability to heal the deep wounds left by loved ones butchered in a senseless war.

We must demand an end to this singular persecution of Vietnam. We must not allow the specter of ancient wrongs to obscure the very pressing needs of all Veterans of the Vietnam War.

That black rag still flies over our public buildings. It still represents a diseased campaign against Vietnam by its defeated conquerors. It must be replaced by reminders of the homeless, the jobless, the sick, dying, horrified survivors of that war, whatever their skin color or nationality.

We must recognize Vietnam and end the embargo now. We must demand payment of the reparations promised to Vietnam by treaty. We must continue to force the rich to pay the full price of their war, at home and overseas.

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FRAGGIN'

Bill Shunas

During the Marine landing in Somalia, much fuss was made of all the TV cameras and reporters getting in the way of the troops. Does anyone really think that these media people could have been there if the Pentagon didn't want them there? During the invasions of Grenada, Panama and Iraq, the media weren't allowed access to the war. Now they're on the beach first? Give me a break.

It appears that this action in Somalia is different from those in Grenada, Panama or Iraq in that there don't seem to be overt imperialist motives, the suppression of a legitimate government, or a lot of civilian casualties. If anything, the ulterior motive is to justify maintaining the military at its current force level. So the media get to watch up close instead of sitting back and regurgitating press releases and videos handed to them by a Pentagon Public Information Officer.

The result of this generous media acceptability in the military action is a propaganda coup for the Pentagon. The Pentagon gains in two ways. First, U.S. military forces are shown using force for a humanitarian purpose. This will enhance and perpetuate in the minds of many well-meaning Americans the myth that most of these American military efforts are humanitarian. Second, and in the long run more devastating, by having the media appear like the Three Stooges and get in the way of an invasion, they give the Pentagon an excuse to deny them a trip on the next invasion. That will allow the Pentagon to cover up the real nature and motive much more easily. Generally speaking, the media are a bunch of inept toadies, but if enough of them are present at an invasion, we have a better chance of finding out the truth.

In matters of a more elevated nature, it appears that the Lord is confused. When the F-16s and A-6s came back from their mid-January bombing of Iraq, then-president Bush declared that the Iraqis were fighting a holy war against infidels like Bush. Now, most people feel that if there is a God, there's only one, whether it be Lord, Jehovah, Allah or the Big Kahuna. If so, which side is God on—the infidel or the Hitler of the 90s?

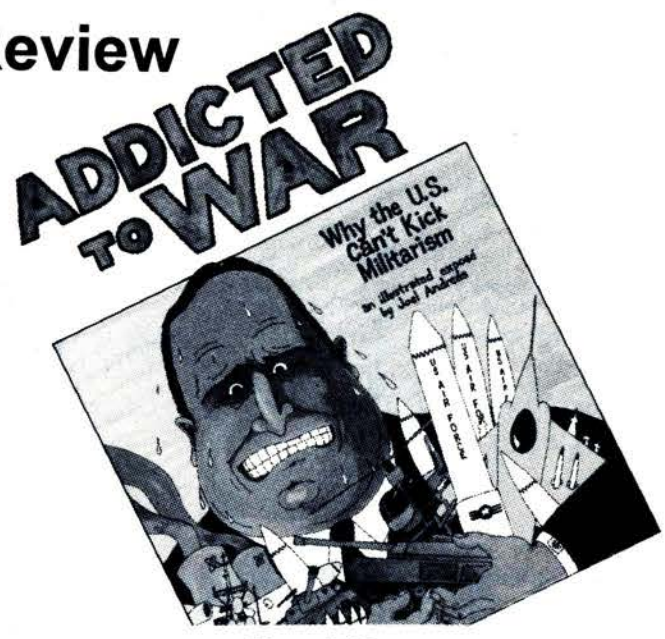
Meanwhile, President Clinton comes along and helps confuse the situation. Described as a devout Baptist, on Inauguration Day he declared his intention to continue the Bush policy toward Iraq and then went along to church to pray. Presumably he did this to find out how to continue the Lord's body count work in Iraq.

This all reminds me of a football game. You know, when they do the postgame interviews after any Super Bowl, someone on the winning team is going to say that they won because the Lord blessed them. And you know that before the game, there were twenty guys on each team praying furiously to perform well. So why did they play the game if the Lord was going to decide? Maybe they played for the non-believers---the guys who use pain killers, tape and steroids to try and gain a little advantage, and don't listen to the Lord. Or maybe it's for the commercials and the bookies.

But what about the Iraq situation? Everyone involved claims to be on 'God's side.' So how come we had the Mother of All Battles and the subsequent Children of the Mother of All Battles? Maybe there's some kind of conspiracy involved here. Maybe these guys all need each other even though they hate each other.

Bush/Clinton needs Saddam (or more likely, his party) to keep the Kurds and Shiites in line so they don't destabilize the region by trying to create a nation-state with their people in Iran and Turkey. Saddam needs Bush/Clinton as an object for his people to hate. Otherwise they might turn their hate to Saddam and overthrow him because the UN sanctions and the air war have brought hard times for the populace. Maybe God is behind it all. Or maybe the Great Satan. Or maybe a couple of demagogues fighting over oil and control of the area. Geopolitics they call it. Some call it needless death for civilians and soldiers. If the Big Kahuna is behind this, he done wrong again. He's got to decide which side is righteous and tell the other side to back off. And give a little oil to everyone. Or better yet, develop an alternative source of fuel.

Book Review



Louise Hiken

ADDICTED TO WAR: WHY THE U.S. CAN'T KICK MILITARISM

(New Society Publishers, 1993, 64 pp, 8½ x 11, $5.95)

In the early 1970's, Joel Andreas published an illustrated "comic book" which described the way in which the Rockefeller dynasty had accumulated its wealth. That satirical exposé remains one of the highlights of that period of unrest and rebellion. It's biting wit and historical accuracy made the book a must for readers between the ages of 11 and 90.

Now Andreas has duplicated that feat with the publication of "Addicted to War: Why the U.S. Can't Kick Militarism." Why our country is moving towards an ever more aggressive and bellicose foreign policy in a new era which many thought would be characterized by peace and a reduction of international tensions is hardly a subject to be taken lightly; yet Andreas is able to gently and laughingly lead the reader through a detailed analysis of the causes of militarism as well as its results. The impact of our forays abroad not only creates havoc in the war zones, but at home, as well.

With chapters such as "The High Price of Militarism," "Manifest Destiny," "Exploits of the Self-Proclaimed World Policeman," "The New World Order," and "Militarism and the Media," the author covers the why's and wherefore's of our nation's dependency upon killing as a national pastime. With annotations detailing the sources for information presented throughout the comic, the reader is aware that the matter being discussed is a deadly serious one, albeit humorously presented.

For example, in one set of cartoons, Andreas describes the impact our military budget has on human resources:

"The Pentagon budget represents a huge diversion of resources away from the basic needs of the people. Between 1948 and 1988 the U.S. spent more than $9.2 trillion building up its military might. Just how much is $9,200,000,000,000 worth?"

"It adds up to more than the cumulative monetary value of all human-made wealth in the U.S.! In other words, the government has spent more on the military over the last four decades than the value of all the factories, machinery, roads, bridges, water and sewage systems, airports, railroads, power plants, office building, shopping centers, schools, hospitals, hotels, houses, etc, in this country put together!"

The cartoon figures, with their caustic comments about the story being told, enhance the otherwise troubling information immeasurably.

The final chapter, entitled "Resisting Militarism," is geared more towards provoking thought about the question of opposing the current agenda than it is towards providing a list or outline for proposed anti-militarism activities. For the latter programs, one should contact CCCO, WRL, the NLG Military Law Task Force, NISBICO, or the other organizations actively engaged in combatting our nation's use of military force throughout the world. But as a precursor to such action, "Addicted to War" is a wonderful exercise in enjoyable education.

Individual copies of Addicted to War can be ordered from Illustrated Exposes, 2019 W. Ohio #3, Chicago, Il 60612, for $6.00 plus $2.00 shipping. Please inquire about bulk rates.

Defending a Woman's Right to Choose

WOMEN'S CLINIC DEFENSE

Annie Luginbil,
CHICAGO CHAPTER
STEERING COMMITTEE

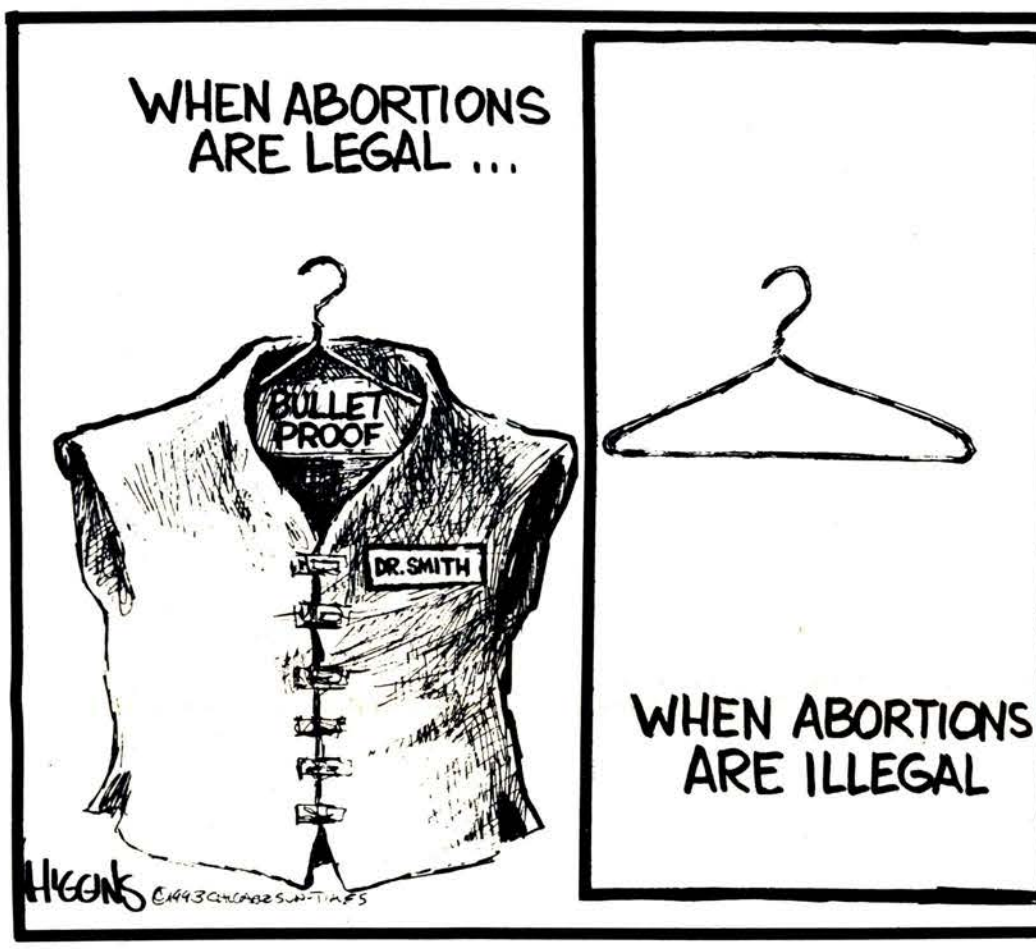
"Our Bodies, Our Lives Our Rights to Decide!

This chant and others like it have been ringing out in front of womens' clinics on a regular basis, as pro-choice forces escort patients and counter anti-choice zealots. In the last several years, broad coalitions (both official and unofficial) have been formed to do clinic defense. Pro-choice Midwest VVAW members have spent numerous mornings outside womens' clinics, both in Chicago and Milwaukee, defending a woman's right to make her own decisions and to choose abortion.

Clinic defense is an experience that varies every time it is done, depending on what forces are present. Actions have ranged from chanting and counter-picketing the "lifers" to physically blocking their attempts to harass patients entering (or leaving) clinics. Sometimes the "antis" outnumber the defenders by large margins, particularly when anti-choice groups specifically target one city or clinic and send their members there from all over.

Milwaukee experienced this during 1992, when "Operation Rescue" and its local affiliate "Missionaries to the Pre-born" declared a summer of attacks on Milwaukee clinics. A number of Milwaukee VVAW members, including Natasha Mansur, Fred Wallace, Muriel Hogan, and John Zutz, as well as Chicago VVAW members Annie Luginbill and Bill Branson woke early in the morning not only on Saturdays but during the week. This was necessary to be at one of the clinics by 5:30 AM. On those days when the "antis" outnumbered the defenders, the atmosphere was one of an outdoor circus. The entire spectrum of "born-again anti-choice Christians" (known to some clinic defenders as "the droolers and spitters") was represented. They included a man carrying a cross with a Cabbage Patch doll bungi-corded to it, and anti-choice male clergy (with attendant sychopantic church ladies). The families with little 'fetus'-button wearing kids, who cared so little about their children (since they were born already) that they continually required reminding by the pro-choice people that said children were running in the streets, playing in the parking lots, or balancing on loading dock railings. Then there were the professional "praying kids" - the ones who were earning summer job money by being paid for being arrested at clinics.

In Milwaukee, VVAW people took turns being "gates" between the lines of defenders and the clinics, pivoting to let patients in. Some served as "site leaders" and acted as liaisons between the clinic defenders and the police department. For many of us, it was an interesting change to be on the same side of the question as the police. We had to invent new chants because of this. When the "antis" leaped the police barricades and ran pellmell for the clinic doors, knowing they would be arrested and taken to the Milwaukee Armory for processing, we chanted "Drive yourselves to the Armory; save our cops some energy" or "We're with you, boys in blue." As police buses rolled up to take the arrestees away, the "lifers" heard us shout "Your bus is here; it's time to go...Your bus is here; it's time to go." Every time we started the chant "Hey, we have choice; oh yes we do; hey, we have choice; now how 'bout you?" a woman in the Milwaukee Police Tactical Squad literally danced in the parking lot in time to the chanting!



During the "siege of Milwaukee," there were also many good days when clinic defenders greatly outnumbered attackers. On these days, the World Without Religion Foundation folks (who knew absolutely no fear) took on the "antis" verbally. Even when massively outnumbered (tactically) they passed out 'non-tracts' exposing the fallacies of religious/christian opposition to abortion. The spirited pro-choice chanting and singing drowned out the praying and hymns of the "antis." The fake fetuses, manufactured by a Chicago mold maker who also manufactures body parts for the movies, were completely obscured by signs reading "Keep Abortion Safe and Legal" or "Cheeseheads for Choice." Most importantly, all clinics stated open, and all patients were served.

Clinic defense has continued in Milwaukee as well as Chicago and other cities during the fall and winter, since the anti-choice forces have not given up and gone away. Their numbers are smaller, but they are just as obnoxious. Small groups of "antis" continue to harass clinic-going patients on a regular basis. Rather, the "lifers" are biding their time until the anniversary of the Roe V. Wade decision, when attacks on clinics nationwide are threatened.

[Since this article was submitted, a Doctor was murdered by a fanatic "anti" in Florida. Noxious chemicals are being dumped inside clinics in a continuing conspiracy to attack clinics and the patients who use them. ed]

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&
The Veteran
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BEWARE OF "VVAW AI"

This notice is to alert you to a handful of individuals calling themselves the "Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist". Their activities are centered mainly in Seattle, San Francisco and New York City. They often claim to be part of our organization and their most recent antics include burning American flags at demonstrations.
"VVAW AI" is not a faction, caucus or part of VVAW. They are not affiliated with us in any way. "VVAW AI" is actually the creation of an obscure, ultra-left sect called the Revolutionary Communist Party and is designed to pimp off of VVAW's history of struggle and continued activusm. Their objective is to create confusion and deception in order to promote themselves.
We urge all people and organizations to beware of this bogus outfit. Don't be fooled, they are not what they claim. Forewarned is forearmed.

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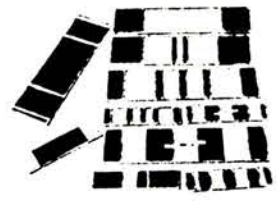

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Changes in Military Strategy: Strategic Mobility Initiative

Barry Romo
NATIONAL COORDINATOR

Those who suspect the U.S. may be in Somalia to establish a new military base are a bit behind the times. The military's new strategic program gives the U.S. a formula for fighting anyplace in the world without costly overseas facilities.

The plan, outlined in a statement issued by chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, General Colin Powell, allows the Army to be based domestically, but will rely on Navy and Air Force transports for rapid response overseas deployment.

5000 troops could be positioned anywhere in the world within five days and 45,000 more within 30 days. The three "30-day" divisions would be followed by two others, and the remaining half of the Army--82nd Airborne, 101st Airborne, 7th Light Infantry, 1st Calvary and the 24th Mechanized Divisions--would complete the Ready Reaction Force, able to strike within 75 days.

The plan requires pre-positioned equipment aboard ships, unlike the scenario in Saudi Arabia for the Iraq War. And, for the first time, Army units will preposition supplies aboard ships. The supplies will remain packaged for use in an "emergency"--a tactic used very successfully by the Marines during Operation Desert Storm.

Powell's announcement confirms a predominate role for the Army in 21st Centruy military actions. The Navy must come up with the necessary sea transports or convert existing ships instead of getting history's more glamorous air craft carriers. The Air Force will be required to provide supportive C-141s, C-17s and C-5 transport air fleets so it can taxi troops around. Unlike previous aircraft, today's Air Force planes will be able to land at nearly any airport in the world.

Initially, Strategic Mobility would be expensive: The cost of the new acquisitions would run about $7 billion. But, the U.S. will be able to suspend its dependence on costly foreign bases. Most large facilities like those in Panama, Philippines, and Germany would be rendered obsolete.

The new plans not only explain why the U.S. gave up major installations in the Philippines and reduced troop strength in Panama: The Initiative is being played out in Somalia as a humane rehearsal for tomorrow's military theater--like those beach landings at night, securing the local airport, and 'how to build a bridge with these new lightweight spans we just happen to have handy'.

Kennedy Also Brought Us Vietnam Challenges for the 90s

Jess Jespersen
MIDWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR

I see 1993 as a year filled with new hope and challenges. We now have a Vietnam Vet for our Vice President. We have the President of the Disabled American Veterans, one of the best veteran advocacy organizations in the nation, named to head the U. S. Department of Veterans Administration (USDVA). Can we believe our eyes and ears?

Some have likened these times to the "idealistic Kennedy years." This sentiment raises some unanswered questions. Kennedy was fond of adventurous "splendid little wars." We certainly don't need the return of those days.

American troops are still being sent to foreign soil. There is still a large military presence in the Gulf, playing games with Saddam. We all know what these entanglements can lead to. Our new President must weigh his actions very carefully. These conflicts have serious hidden costs, costs that are paid by veterans.

We must help the veterans who were in the Gulf War. The US government has rewarded these brave young men and women with the benefits of heavy delayed stress, untested anti-chemical drugs, a blood infection, hydrocarbon poisoning, and a host of other health problems. The old VA is already denying benefits to these soldiers.

The troops that were recently sent to Somalia will present the VA with new challenges. We're all aware of PTSD and the crippling effects of this disease. Can you imagine the shock the US forces encountered upon entering that country? We've all seen the news reporting and the pictures of the suffering population. Are our soldiers equipped to deal with the horror of the dying children? Can these men and women ever forget the sights and smells of this tragedy? We all can answer that question with an emphatic NO. We are going to have to help these veterans sort through their experiences and try to get on with their lives.

Another issue that requires our attention is the involuntary separation of thousands and thousands of people who tried to make the military a career. With the downsizing of the military, these people are at great risk of being thrown out of work. Already, the military has let its strategy out of the bag. Offenses that once were ignored now lead to "Administrative Discharges." These discharges are usually General Under Honorable Conditions. But I fear that we will see increasing numbers of less-than-honorable discharges. That way, the VA will be able to deny benefits to these vets. Think of how hard it will be for these individuals to make any type of subsequent career for themselves. We have had enough experience with this subject to know that it is very hard to get these discharges upgraded. Will this tactic result in more homeless vets?

Unemployed vets? It's a sure bet that there will be a whole new subclass of veterans. Can the present economy provide decent jobs for these people? I doubt it. We can't provide enough jobs right now. What will the release of thousands upon thousands of veterans do to the job market? Well, with some college graduates already working in low paying jobs or not at all, the impact of more unemployed seems inevitable. How will this situation be resolved?

"Prove this...what was it exactly that you took?...on what dates?...any witnesses?" I think I've heard this before. Let us all hope that Jesse Brown is given real control over the VA and that services to the veteran become less an ordeal to get.

This new year poses some great challenges. We as veterans must redouble our efforts to help those who get caught in a bind. We must stand ready to do battle with the new administration until the needs of all veterans are met. We must also fight for a government that makes no more veterans.

Draft Dodgers, Heroes and Hypocrites

Bill Branson
NATIONAL STAFF

Let us make a comment, as combat veterans, on the attacks against political cantidates for being 'draft-dogers'.

Will we forget the war criminals who callously sent us to die.for 'democracy' while they persecuted those who risked their lives to end the war.

What is so foul about self preservation? Why should a young man choose a horrible, despised death? For the "American Way", which the enlightened youth perceived as a plastic existence, designed to justify caving in to lives of slavery to the rich. For 'democracy' which was instructed with all the trappings and excesses of the fascism their parents fought against in WWII?

How the coddled flunkies of the rich despise those 'draft dodgers, protestors, etc.' who resisted!

As is some aspect of cowardice should be attached to the millions of people who dared the brutal armerment of the state when they took to the streets.

We are sickened by the outright murders the state committed at Jackson State, Kent State ...etc. It is beyond our ability to count the number of jailings, beatings, the water hosing, electric cattle prods, tear gas.., brutal arrests, and searches amounting to little less than rape, which were liberally applied to those who dared to oppose the war.

Have we forgotten the pervasive repression, spying, espionage, provocation carried out by the FBI, CIA etc. How 'activists' were hounded from their jobs, black listed, investigated by secret agencies, such as the Chicago Red Squad, which were beyond the law?

Which of these brave patriots would even risk the disfavor of their rich patrons with a mild disagreement over the placement of a toxic waste site? Are the paid toadies of the rich to define our heroes and cowards? When are the blinker eyed servants of the rich like Strom Thurmond more abject than when, on their knees, they serve their rich patrons? How many of them nurse the wounds of war? Are their dreams haunted with any more fearsome ordeal than an irate phone call from Wall Street?

When men and women cast aside the respect of their families, abandoned their education, placed themselves lists of the secret police in order to publicly resist an unjust and deadly tyranny, Were they acting any differently than those who rose up against the so called "communist" governments in Eastern Europe?

Were we veterans supposed to hold in contempt those who fought so boldly to save out lives? They liked rock and roll and free love. More importently, they hated the same things we did. We hated the autocratic rule of the brass.

Our angry response was to join that movement. We lent it a vigor and impact, unseen in US streets since the 1930's. We found a welcome in the 'left' unmatched by business, government, or all to often, at home. We found comrades in that movement, both to teach and learn from.

My View

Reconginze Vietnam

John Zutz
MIDWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR

The Vietnamese government has just released all the documentation, including photographs, concerning US POWs.

Think of how much resistance there must have been in the Vietnamese government and military to releasing even portions of those records. We know our own comparable records are classified so highly that Senate committees can't read them. There are likely to be many interesting things recorded in Hanoi's version.

Those records will surely tell more than the status of prisoners. If you know how to read them, you will probably be able to determine strategies, force deployments, and who knows what else of military intelligence value. But Hanoi is so desperate for aid that they are opening those records and giving a former enemy carte blanche.

What else may be in those records? I suspect that there will be some evidence of the Soviet Union's interest in our pilots. Even though it was a conventional war, our guys surely were thoroughly trained about our nuclear capability. There were few secrets kept in Vietnamese prison camps. Certainly those who returned were already debriefed on that subject. But I suspect we won't hear about minor details like that, unless the records show our pilots were shipped from Hanoi to Moscow.

What won't be in them? Anything about most of those shot down in Cambodia or Laos. The Vietnamese were influential in those countries, but they did not control them. Holding the Vietnamese liable for actions of other countries is like saying the US can control Canada.

To understand why there won't be any hard evidence of live POWs we need to remember what was happening eighteen to twenty years ago. We also have to examine Vietnam's place in the world today.

As the war ground on, we were beginning to realize that we couldn't win the hearts and minds of the South Vietnamese. We had even less chance of winning the war. Nixon and Kissinger were looking for a way to withdraw without looking like the Vietnamese had won. This strategy was called 'Peace with Honor.'

The Paris peace talks ended with a number of promises on each side. North Vietnam promised to withdraw its troops and return our POWs. The US government promised to withdraw its troops and pay North Vietnam millions of dollars in reparations. Later on we refused to pay the reparations, and North Vietnam decided not to withdraw its troops.

Now, to use any remaining POWs (as some insist) as trading chips to get the reparation money, Hanoi would first have to let us know they are holding them. They have stated over and over, from the beginning, that on the contrary, they don't have anyone.

It's hard to blackmail someone if you deny you are holding the hostage.

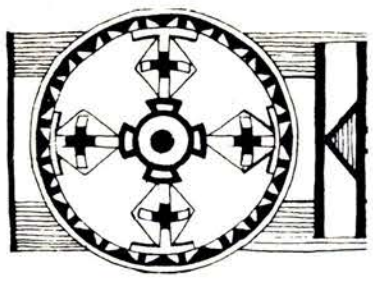
Why else would they hold anyone? As slave labor, some say. But the Vietnamese population is growing by about one million people per year. There is plenty of cheap labor. The work ethic is strong - you either work hard or you starve. It would cost them more to guard, clothe, feed and house the 'slaves' and their keepers than the labor would be worth.

As one of the poorest countries in the world, the Vietnamese are dependent on aid from others and therefore are extremely conscious of the world's opinion of them. They also have a well-developed sense of honor. Can you imagine their embarrassment if somehow they had to publicly admit that they lied, or were just uninformed about some prisoner who happened to crop up? And can you imagine the heads rolling if the evidence of that prisoner came from their own detailed records?

Hanoi wants to move forward. They are tearing down the "Hanoi Hilton" and building a luxury hotel complex on the site. They have sent strong signals (the release of the records is only the latest of many) that they want friendly relations.

So, as I said, there are likely to be some interesting things in Hanoi's records. But the one thing that will not be in them is hard evidence of live Americans being held against their will. The MIA zealots will be disappointed.

I feel it is time to move on. We can normalize relations with Vietnam without forgetting the past. We can help build a strong partner at the same time that we are looking for crash sites. The Vietnamese have gone a long way down George Bush's "road map." It's time we made a substantial move.



Ann Hirschman
NEW JERSEY VVAW

I tried to write a couple of lines and seven pages came out. I guess I write like I talk.

There are other things that could be said. Leonard Peltier was at Wounded Knee. He was one of the busy, effective people who chopped wood, got things for the elders and children and advised the leadership. He did it all with such unassuming grace that he was much loved by everybody.

I felt like a very small and unimportant cog in a great wheel. I hope that the tone of what I wrote isn't misleading. The courage and strength of the AIM people, especially the Wounded Knee residents, was and is an inspiration.

The most difficult part of this memoir is that Leonard Peltier is still in prison, Anna May Asquatch is dead at the hands of the FBI, and things on the reservations have changed far too little in 20 years.

We all have to keep on keeping on.

Love to all,

Book Review

Barry Romo
NATIONAL COORDINATOR

"From Yale to Jail, a Memory"
By David Dellinger
Parthenon, April, 1993

Dave Dellinger is probably one of the most beloved leaders of the Anti-War Movement in this country. His voice has been strong and clear against war, and for justice in the Third World.

His autobiography begins with his earliest memory, that of the end of World War I, and continues to the present.

His ideas, memories and experiences in refusing to kill during World War II, his Civil Rights experiences, opposing the Vietnam War along with Martin Luther King, the Chicago Eight Trial, and VVAW put this century in a personal and political perspective.

This book is certainly a must read for those of us interested in the history of the progressive movement since the Second World War.

VVAW Remembers Nat
WOUNDED KNEE-

The Battle of Wounded Knee was in fact a massacre. On December 29th, 1890, the U.S. Seventh Cavalry Killed 300 Sioux men, women and children.

Mostly unarmed, the Indians were attacked after trying to surrender. Using Hotchkiss guns [breechloading cannon] and rifles, the soldiers took revenge for Custer,s death at the Little Big Horn.

The cavalry troopers were awarded 18 Medals of Honor for the slaughter which ended with some Indian survivors being buried alive.

[Ann Hirschman is a nurse and has been a respected member of VVAW for 20 years.]

When I got the message that Barry wanted an article about Wounded Knee I thought: "Why now?" When he said it was the 20th anniversary I thought: "NO WAY", but it's true!

Twenty years ago I was in Fort Lauderdale (a relative political backwater) hoping for a few months of normal life. Peter Schnall, a doctor I'd known in Medical Committee for Human Rights, called to recruit for medics at Wounded Knee. I said: "Sure, I'll go if I'm needed." I was young, single, temporarily between jobs and addicted to the adrenaline rush you get in emergency medicine. Did I forget to mention stupid?

Five weeks later I was on my way. The first complication came at the airport where I discovered that the MOST DIRECT flight to Rapid City, South Dakota, had three stops and a plane change in Chicago. It took the agent 35 minutes to write up the ticket. When I mentioned that the two guys in suits behind me in line would want to go on the same plane - she cried.

We'd heard that people trying to go to "the Knee" were being "detained" under various pretexts. I noticed that these people had tried to go solo, so I called Chicago VVAW and asked for support. I'm finally able to thank you guys for getting me to my second plane intact and not in handcuffs.

At Rapid City, I was met by a scared lawyer from Mark Lane's crew. He seemed bent on getting "informed consent" and kept saying cheerful stuff like: "You DO know that there is shooting going on?"

After assuring the lawyers that I was prepared to risk my ass, I was introduced to a pediatrician named Mike from California, who was to be my partner for a few weeks. We got into the chopper. Next war I get the one with doors? We had a nice trip 'til the FBI tried to shoot us down.

Our pilot decided to land at the FBI checkpoint because he didn't have a deathwish. We were strip-searched (you haven't lived 'til you've been nude, in an APC, in the winter, in South Dakota). A lot of our stuff was confiscated. They took our toilet paper and tampons, so we couldn't make Molotov cocktails (for you skeptics, NOBODY could make this shit up!). They took all the cigarettes they could find.
They did give us back our clothes.

Finally, we were in Wounded Knee. After all of the chaos getting there it was a haven of peace. The outgoing medics briefed us and introduced us to the Medicine Men in charge (Black Elk and Crow Dog) and left.

One of the first people I met was Eva, a nurse from the AIM chapter in Kansas. She asked me if I knew how to shoot and if I'd agree to provide first-line security in the "infirmary." I mentioned I could shoot and was issued an M-1 for the duration. Later, on speaking gigs for the Wounded Knee Legal Committee, I was often asked about the rumored sexism inside. I pointed out that there was limited ammo and that it was not a great time to have to teach people to shoot.

It only took a few hours to see that there was a real problem with both communication and deliveries to us from the outside world. On my first night the most useful thing I did was to help Dennis Banks print the newsletter by recycling waste ink.

Several of the people in the Knee were vets and their ability to cope with the firefights and aftermath really helped me. I would take cues from them as how to act and it really helped me survive and not do anything insensitive to the other people there.

There was one big firefight while I was in and I was scared green until I had some patients to fix. Frank Clearwater had just come in with his pregnant wife when the shit hit. He was with several others in the church on the hill when he got shot. I was about 300 yards away when I got called and two guys who were "runners" helped me up the hill.

Inside the one-room building, it was horrible. Frank had been hit in the head behind his ear and the back of his head was gone. The doctor was a quarter of a mile away, there was shooting going on, and I'd never been trained as a brain surgeon. I tried. It wasn't enough. Maybe nothing would have helped, but I tried. Frank was evacuated under white flags (they kept shoot-

tive American Struggle —20 YEARS LATER

In 1973, Oglalas, Sioux along with American Indian Movement "took over" their own territory, Wounded Knee. For more than two months they held off the FBI, Federal Marshals, and Vigilantes. This force was equipped with helicopters and armored personnel carriers. Veterans, especially VVAW played an important role in supporting this struggle.

An excellent book on the subject is Voices From Wounded Knee, 1973, Akwesasne Notes, 1974.

ing anyway) to the infirmary still barely alive. Mike (the doctor) and I and, more importantly, the Medicine Men, agreed that we needed to get Frank to a hospital. We decided that Mike would ride with him to insure that he actually got care when he arrived. Frank Clearwater died a few days later.

Now we had no doctor and, for once, my arrogance stood me in good stead as I was too conceited to be scared. I also still had the benefit of Black Elk, Crow Dog, and Eva to work with.

The next casualty was a guy whose name I still can't use because I don't know his legal status. He took a hit in the arm and there was an entry wound but no exit. We had no X-ray machine and the arm was twice its normal size. I knew that if we didn't get the bullet out we might lose the arm or the patient despite the few antibiotics we had. Black Elk advised a sweat lodge to try to get an idea. This was not in my nursing school books but ANYTHING was worth a try.

Sweat lodge is like a sauna, only a lot hotter. The ceremony seems very simple. A group of people, usually led by a Medicine Man, meditate and ask for help while seated in a circle around superheated rocks.

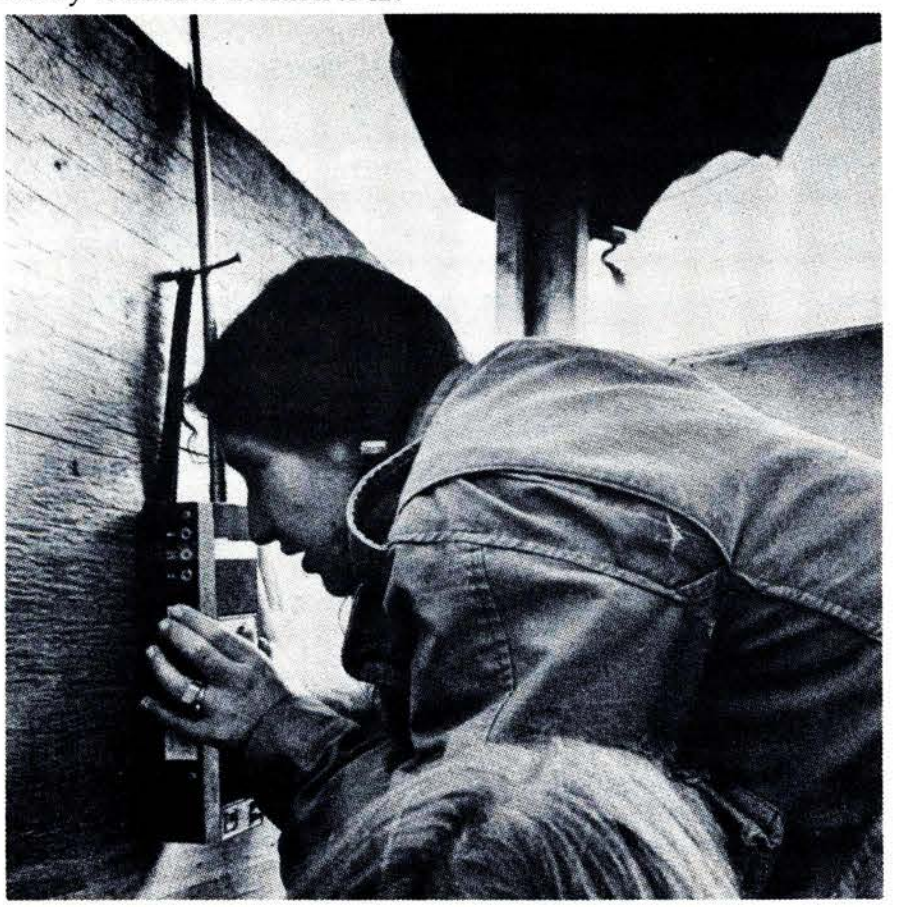
Despite the 28 degree outdoor temperature, the sweat is done in the nude. The sweat lodge is so intense that people basically melt when they get out. Mike took his pulse after his first sweat and it was over 200!

After this sweat Black Elk ordered us back to the infirmary. We RAN back. I would have bet against being able to walk.

Black Elk then found the bullet, easily! We were able to remove it. The arm slowly started to look like a human limb again.

Then there was Cooper. I've always said that only the good die young and that Al Cooper will live to 143. He didn't have to test the theory the week I met him. Vets are like that! Al was on security team and decided to fix a radio on his time off. He did forget to unplug it. He had ammo belts across his chest. The current passed through his heart. Eva had never put in an IV but she did great. We now had a patient with a pulse of 31 (not real compatible with a long life). Usually I'd have done an EKG but we didn't have one. So we punted. I finally felt like I'd got one right when Al woke up and demanded to go back on patrol.

I could bore everybody with more gory stories but enough already.



Ann Herschman
Inside Wounded Knee

There was an incident near the end of my stay which taught me again that you can't believe the feds. There had been a foray to a neighboring ranch and the people got back in time for the evening news. The lead story was of the burning down (by arson) of this ranch. We ran outside. We looked at the ranch. We were CONFUSED! Later that night a bunch of tracer bullets hit the ranch and we weren't confused anymore.

Then it was time to leave. We thought the new crew would be fine if they listened to Black Elk and Crow Dog.

Our exit was negotiated with the FBI. With us was a very sick young girl who needed medical care outside. The FBI had not checked with BIA/tribal police goons and they had other ideas. We watched as our patient and the FBI were about to leave us with the goons. I did not expect, at that point, to get out. BIA goons had "eliminated" other people leaving Wounded Knee and we knew it.

One of the most conflicted moments of my life was when our patient got so much worse that the FBI got scared for her...and came back for us. (I was GLAD to be in FBI custody and, maybe, glad that the patient needed us, and guilty for being glad.) I must have spent too much time with the Mother Cabrini Brigade.

The FBI took our patient on to the hospital and left us with a couple of people at a farm house in the middle of a field. The people were supposed to be "liaison" people from Washington. It felt like a hard cop - soft cop game to me. That night, after a meal (?) of what looked like WWII C-rats, we were rescued by a wonderful guy in a Toyota 4WD and brought back to Rapid City. We had showers, cigarettes and Pepsi all at the same time.

My next stop was the national VVAW meeting at Placitas. I do not remember the trip, I do not remember the camp-out, I do not remember ANNIE BAILEY being there. It's a good thing you vets taught me about PTSD, or I might worry about this.

I really don't know how to finish this. There are too many people to thank to list everybody. I learned more than I taught and got more that I gave. I have tried to use the lessons and gifts as best I could.

Bigots and Brass:

Gays and the Military

Barry Romo
NATIONAL COORDINATOR

SOUND FAMILIAR?

"Men on-board ship live in particularly close association; in their messes, one man sits beside another; their bunks are close together; in their common tasks they work side by side;... they form a closely knit, highly coordinated team...How many would accept such conditions if required to do so, without resentment and just as a matter of course?" "Few if any." Department of the Navy, 1942.

"The presence of [Homosexuals] adversely affects the ability of the military services to maintain discipline, good order and morals; to foster mutual trust and confidence...To facilitate assignment and worldwide deployment of servicemembers who frequently must live and work under close conditions affording minimal privacy." Department of Defense, 1982.

The finding that Blacks could not live with Whites in close quarters appears suspiciously close to the finding that Heterosexuals and Homosexuals cannot live side by side.

The irony is that an Afro-American Chairman is pushing the same policy that would have denied him advancement and promotion in WWII.

General Powell doesn't like the comparison. I don't blame him. He advanced because others, like General of the Armies George Marshall, fought for human justice in this instance. The struggle for Civil Rights, voting, etc. magnified and grew. Powell benefitted from others' sacrifices, not from his own driving ambition or competence. Now that it's his turn to push the clock forward, he stalls. He complains. He whines just like the white segregationist, Strom Thurmond, standing at his side.

Unfortunately for Powell and the rest, one has but to read the only two studies commissioned by the Military: The Navy's Crittenden Report of 1957 and the Army's "Nonconforming Sexual Orientations and Military Suitability," December 1988. MILITARY STUDIES AND EXPERIENCE SAY LIFT THE BAN. Both reports recommend the lifting of the ban on homosexuals serving in the military. One can also look to Israel, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden to see if their military prowess has suffered.

HOMOSEXUALS HAVE ALWAYS DIED ALONGSIDE HETEROSEXUALS

Most important is the fact conceded by all that up to 10% of the present military is homosexual. Such personnel are already living side by side with heterosexual servicemembers.

Gays have been in the U.S. military from the beginning. It is generally conceded that Alexander Hamilton, an officer in the Continental Army and aide-de-camp to General Washington, was gay (sexually explicit love letters to and from other men were found in his personal effects). Probably 10% of the soldiers whose names are engraved on the Vietnam Memorial were gay.

TO THE BRASS: TREAT PEOPLE EQUALLY, OR GET OUT

I find the posturing of the Generals and Admirals amusing. When I was a platoon leader in Vietnam I wasn't given consideration for my personal wants and needs. I was told what to do and when to do it. Screw their schoolboy rhetoric and predictions of doom. If they aren't men or women enough to deal with other races, or sexes then, maybe some time on the 'outside' will be good for them.

Women in the military have to put up with sexual innuendo, harassment, the threat of rape (as recent events have shown), and treatment as second class soldiers/sailors. Yet they perform all tasks in an outstanding manner. I think the brass could learn a few lessons from them. There are bigger things to worry about in the military than whether someone is lusting after your buns!

UCMJ DOESN'T APPLY TO SEXUALLY JITTERY BRASS

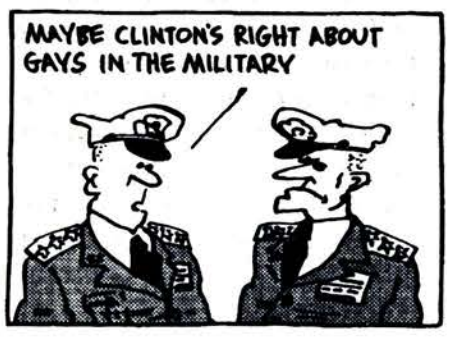
When more than two dozen servicemenbers thought the Gulf War unjust and immoral, they were jailed for demanding and expressing their rights.

Now highly paid officers think they can speak out against the Commander-in-Chief. If Clinton had any guts, he would order them to shut up or go to jail, just like the poor doggies.

STEREOTYPES BUILD A USEFUL MILITARY...FOR THE RICH

Of course, the problem with the brass is not just that they are sexist or racist. The military is a Death Machine. It exists primarily to kill anyone or destroy anything the rich are afraid of. Boys and girls are encouraged to participate in this endeavor by the feelings of superiority they are allowed over a constantly dehumanized enemy. The enemy becomes the other: the "Gook," "Indian," "Nigger," "Camel Jockey," ad nauseam. It's only later, after leaving the service, that many veterans realize this: To the rich, they were included in those categories.

After a tour in 'Nam, I can't figure out why anyone would **want** to go into the service. However, I do know that keeping people out because of who they are is wrong.



BY WASSERMAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Forgotten Philippines

Amerasians Abandoned, Sue U.S. for Rights

(Agence France Presse)

A group of Filipino children abandoned by their American servicemen fathers will seek damages from the US Navy in a class suit to be filed in California this month, a missionary aiding them said Monday.

"We want to prove negligence," said Roman Catholic priest Fr. Shay Cullen, who runs a foundation for Amerasians in Olongapo City, which saw off the last US servicemen at the Subic Naval Base in November.

He said the United States must come to the aid of what he estimated to be 10,000 "throw away children" of servicemen in Olongapo and nearby Angeles City, which hosted a US air base devastated by a 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruption.

American authorities must "develop means of support" for abandoned Amerasians so "they won't be left in poverty and discrimination," Cullen said in a telephone interview from Olongapo, but he gave no details.

He said that the "abuse of women and children" was "allowed to go on with the full knowledge of the US Navy" in Olongapo.

Many Amerasian children have ended up as prostitutes—like most of their mothers.

Cullen said he will accompany four Amerasian children to the United States this month to press their case in behalf of all Amerasians in the Philippines, a former US colony.

They will be represented by Burlingame, a California law firm which offered to handle the case for free after reading a report on the Amerasians in the San Francisco Examiner newspaper, Cullen said.

The Amerasians' suit is also intended to help push US legislation granting Filipino Amerasians the option to take US citizenship, which Cullen said has been granted to such children in South Korea, Japan, Thailand and Indochina.

US authorities had excluded Filipino Amerasians, saying that unlike elsewhere in Asia, half-Americans do not suffer from discrimination in the Philippines, which still has strong links with the United States.

President Ramos has also called on Washington to help ease the plight of the Amerasians, but Cullen said the Philippine government and authorities in Olongapo City must also share responsibility.

First it was Blacks . .

Gays in the Military

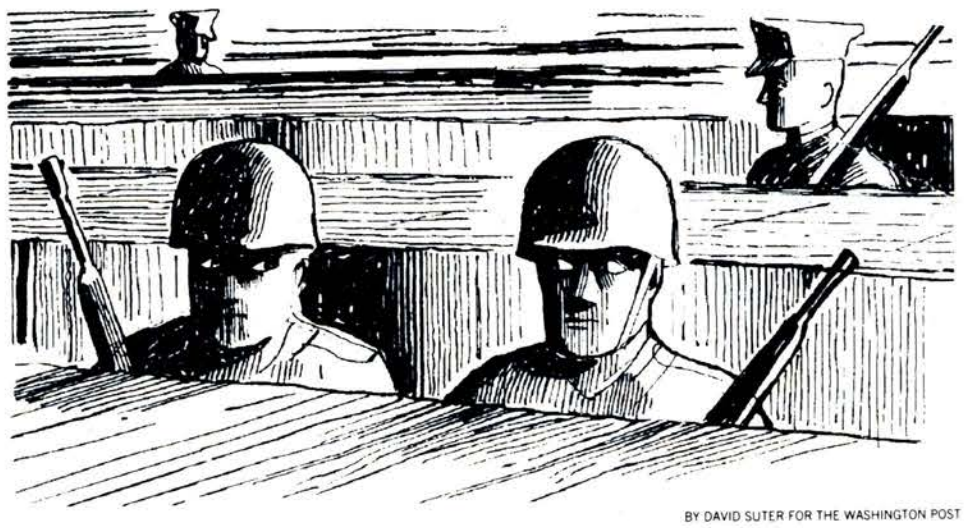
Ray Parrish,
CHICAGO CHAPTER
STEERING COMMITTEE

President Clinton comes to his present position as Commander in Chief with no military service and little experience dealing with complaints from GIs or veterans. Twenty-five years ago he relied upon advice from draft and military counselors when he was trying to deal with unjust draft laws and an immoral war. The people here at the Midwest Committee for Military Counseling (MCMC) have been doing draft, military and veterans' counseling since the '60s and helped write Fighting Back: Lesbian and Gay Draft, Military and Veterans' Issues. We hope that once again military counselors will be able to help him, this time to better understand the problems that he faces in lifting the military's homosexual ban.

The heart of the problem is homophobia, or fear of homosexuals. MCMC regularly gets clippings from the military's newspaper Stars and Stripes sent by counselees. The letters to the editor show that the antipathy towards homosexuals is frequently virulent but many servicemembers have expressed support for changing the policy. This anti-homosexual prejudice is the problem to be addressed, not something that should prevent gays and lesbians from serving openly.

Since the victims of racism, sexism and homophobia ALL face discrimination, the parallels are obvious, although often denied. Racism, sexism and homophobia arise because we all have had our social stereotypes formed by a racist, sexist and homophobic culture. We need to acknowledge our own predispositions and struggle to eradicate these evils from our own personalities.

Some polls have reported that a majority of Americans consider homosexual practices "unnatural." But that's misleading, given that most respondents are heterosexual and believe their own practices to be "natural." A majority of the American public also thinks that homosexuals should not be discriminated against. This shows us that not all heterosexuals are homophobic and that some people can be tolerant of others' lifestyles without wanting to participate. This also raises the issue of the separation of church and state.



BY DAVID SUTER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Those who see homosexuals as "unnatural" base this view upon some religious doctrine. Yet gay and lesbian support groups have sprung up in most major religions despite the bigotry of some of their fellow-worshippers. Thus, it is only a minority of the larger congregations or the whole of the smaller ones that refuse to tolerate homosexuals. Regardless of the polls, we should not allow government policy to be based upon religious convictions.

For many otherwise kindhearted people, homophobia is a blind spot. They can struggle against racism and sexism but still be held captive by this prejudice. Even if they can overcome outdated religious dogma, they still have to deal with the common misconception of gay people as predators. If it weren't so sad, it would be amusing to see such people confusing patriotic soldiers with psychopathic prison inmates.

That is the unspoken problem: straight male fears of rape. Men are unaccustomed to this sense of powerlessness, though every woman ever born knows the feeling. By and large, these fears are unfounded. Homosexual rape is rare outside of prison and gays, like straights, think that rape is wrong. Military regulations will still punish rapists and straight GIs have always bathed with homosexual (though not openly so) GIs with few incidents. Like racists, homophobics will have to have tolerance forced upon them and either learn the errors of their ways or face disciplinary actions if their unacceptable behavior persists.

Sexual privacy wasn't a concern with racial integration, as it was a few years later when the question of women serving in the military was addressed. Prior to their full integration, women served in segregated units in the military. As with racial integration, opponents learned through experience that many of their fears and stereotypes were unfounded. Society in general went through the same process.

We should assume that we will see something similar happen, when openly homosexual servicemembers disprove the myths. For many, this experience suggests that homosexuals should serve in separate units. What they forget is that we have learned that it was the integration of servicemembers, putting them in close daily contact with each other, that destroyed the stereotypes. We have also learned that "separate but equal" is false.

Given our society's rampant homophobia, teenage homosexuals have a hard time admitting to their sexual orientation. If the ban is lifted, we should expect a significant number of young enlistees to 'come out of the closet' at some point in their military career. After demonstrating their abilities as presumed heterosexuals, we can expect their "coming out" to change the minds of many of their unsuspecting comrades.

This will not end the discrimination faced by homosexuals in the military. Racism and sexism continue to undermine the military's morale, since a majority of women report sexual harassment and 70% of those serving life sentences in military prisons are non-white. We can expect closet homophobics to abuse the military's justice, until that system is reformed.

BIGOTS HATE EVERYONE UNLIKE THEMSELVES

We need to realize that most racists and sexists are also homophobic. Bigots seem to be like that. If the ban were lifted, and the homophobics resigned, many of the problems the military has with racism and sexism would disappear with them. Lifting the ban would do more to make the military an attractive career for many people than any other single action.

We also need to realize that none of the military brass who have been leading the opposition to lifting the ban are giving 'unbiased' statements. None of them have said that they wanted to serve with gays and lesbians. They, in fact, are the homophobics who are seeing their prejudices discredited and will face court-martial if the ban is lifted and they are caught acting on those prejudices.

GAYS IN OTHER MILITARIES

The military's ban is only 50 years old. Gays have been in every army ever assembled, and most NATO countries have ended this discrimination. Military regulations define homosexuality so broadly that they include HALF of the adult population, according to studies on human sexuality. Even if we were to limit our concerns to the 10-15% who are actively homosexual, don't these millions of fellow citizens deserve our protection from the misguided homophobics who would rather see them all disappear?

For military counselors the reality is thousands of GIs with unjust discharges and criminal convictions, suicides every year because of society's prejudice, and the perpetuation of a cultural cancer of intolerance which may ruin our society. If the ban were lifted, homosexuals would still face discrimination, but they would have the protection of the law and fellow GIs could support them without fearing a witch-hunt.

The military's past performance in dealing with complaints about discrimination and sexual harassment should cause us great concern when it comes to its ability to deal with this much more controversial issue. If we really want a military with no discrimination, we'll have to reform the UCMJ, discharge and disciplinary regulations, the IG and other investigative agencies, the system of legal representation, and the discharge upgrade boards. Let's deal with the discrimination or else compose the miliary of straight, white, male conservative Christians who don't hesitate to obey any order and love to kill people.

Free Jaime Tadeo

Politicial Prisoner

The Philippine Workers Solidarity Committee (PWSC) calls for the immediate release of Jaime Tadeo and other political prisoners in the Philippines.

PWSC - Chicago has launched a campaign for the release of Jaime Tadeo and other political prisoners in the Philippines. Tadeo's arrest stemmed from his supposed involvement in a 1982 case of alleged misuse of funds, one week after he led a peaceful demon-stration criticizing the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) on inaction, and occurred just two days prior to the 3rd National Congress of the Peasant Movement of the Philippines (Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas). Tadeo is currently serving a 20-year prison term at the New Bilibid Penitentiary in Muntinlupa.

President Fidel V. Ramos, on his December 10th Human Rights Day speech, stated that his administration is working for the scrapping of the Anti-Subversion Law, Republic Act 1700. This would allow all opposition groups, including the communist party, to exist. He even approved guidelines for the immediate release and non-prosecution of those who have been imprisoned for subversion or rebellion. True to his words indeed! There are still more than 300 political prisoners in jails throughout the country due to the government's tactic of convicting all suspected subversives of common crimes such as murder, robbery, arson and illegal possession of firearms in furtherance of rebellion. The railroading of Jaime Tadeo is but one vivid example of how loopholes can be made regarding this so-called benevolent gesture by the present administration.

In the U.S., Caesar Chaves and the United Farmworkers are a symbol of the Farmworkers' fight for agrarian reform. Jaime Tadeo is a voice for the same constituency in the Philippines. But Chaves is not in prison. Tadeo is.

On behalf of the PWSC, we are seeking the help of VVAW members. Please support the release of Jaime Tadeo by sending letters to:

Pres. Fidel V. Ramos
Malacanang Palace
J. P. Laurel Street
San Miguel, Mla. Philippines

Secretary Ernesto Garilao
Department of Agrarian Reform
Quezon City, Phil.

Salamat Po, (Thank You)
Gildo Robles
PWSD-Chicago
4402 N. Hermitage
Chicago, Il. 60640

Farewell Kisses

Dave Kettenhofen
NATIONAL COORDINATOR

In the twilight of his reign, King George has delivered on one of the policies that has been a hallmark of his administration, that of arrogant disregard of the law, both at home and abroad. The presidential pardons of his Iran-Contra partners in crime and the bombing of Iraq were parting shots to the jaw.

The Christmas Eve pardons of six key figures in the Iran-Contra scandal was a mockery of justice. Bush's rationale that their actions were motivated by patriotism, and therefore not criminal, was quite enlightening. Apparently whatever is done under the guise of patriotism, in the president's eyes, is fine and dandy. To hell with the law says he.

Actually, his actions weren't really that surprising. What is disturbing though is the fact that Leonard Peltier, Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), and scores of other political prisoners are languishing in prison for their patriotism while those upper-crust insiders go merrily on their way. It's like pouring salt in their wounds.

On January 13th, U.S. bombers struck Iraq in blatant violation of international law. Without the endorsement of a U.N. Security Council vote, but with the backing of Great Britain and France, the U.S., assuming it had a "blank check", retaliated to Iraq's movements within the no-fly zone in southern Iraq. It was apparently Bush's farewell kiss to Saddam Hussein.

We have become accustomed to such actions, having witnessed forays into Libya, Grenada, Panama, the Philippines, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and so on during the Reagan/Bush era. International boundaries and diplomacy take a back seat when it comes to the appetites of the power brokers.

So as we bid adieu to Bush, he swaggers away, confident that he has shaken the wimp label. I say good riddance. We have had enough of his lies and distortions.

More Guinea Pigs

Ray Parrish,
CHICAGO CHAPTER

Persian Gulf War veterans are experiencing a variety of medical problems that the US military says are "stress induced." Given the nature and severity of these ailments, the government's assertion is ridiculous. These veterans were exposed to the never-before-encountered hyperpolluted atmosphere produced by the burning oil fields and never-before-used experimental drugs that were supposed to provide protection from chemical and biological weapons. Medical science has little or no experience in either of these areas.

Symptoms include fatigue, headache, weight loss, hair loss and discoloration, memory loss, skin rashes and growths, a "pins-and-needles" sensation or a loss of sensation in various areas, confusion, nervousness, muscular weakness and spasm, respiratory problems, deterioration of other organs, impotence, infertility, miscarriage, and birth defects.

The military, as always, claims that it made efforts to protect the troops. Respirators, protective clothes and masks were issued to some troops. Given the climate, the strenuous duties required, and impatient work-detail leaders, it should come as no surprise that these were rarely used.

Several experimental anti-chemical and anti-biological warfare drugs were used in the Persian Gulf. Some were given in pill form and some were injected. Different drugs were given to various units. Records were supposed to have been maintained, but field conditions resulted in more than a few paperwork errors.

The use of these drugs is seldom mentioned in the popular media, and it's not because there is any doubt that they were used. A GI filed a lawsuit against the Army because he didn't want to take these drugs. The court decided that the enlistment contract was all the permission that the military needed to force uniformed personnel to become experimental animals.

Congress has urged the VA to begin a "registry" of Persian Gulf vets in order to track the occurrence and progress of these problems. While this sounds good, it means that the VA will have a monopoly on the information needed to resolve this issue. Based upon the VA's past behavior of concealing information concerning the medical problems faced by GIs exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam, it will be many years and deaths before the whole truth comes out, if ever.

Persian Gulf vets need to get organized; they then need to collect and evaluate their medical documents in a search for patterns. Congress must get the military to release all information on the experimental drugs used in the Persian Gulf. These data have to be systematically analyzed to demonstrate cause and effect. Combined with all of this is the contamination that we get simply by breathing and eating...and let's not forget the unique hazards faced by all GIs: food with unknown contents, armor and artillery shells made from "depleted" (but still radioactive) uranium, equipment treated with hazardous fungi-herbicides...and the list goes on.

The real issue, as ever, is money. If the issues raised by Atomic Bomb and Agent Orange vets were addressed, then millions of civilians affected by radioactive or toxic contaminants would be due compensation. The large oil, power and defense contractors, and perhaps even the federal government, would have to pay. The true cost of our society's reliance upon nuclear power, chemicals and military intervention would become obvious to the consumers and taxpayers who would be forced to pay.

The veterans of the Persian Gulf war join these other vets as society's "canaries": those small birds taken into coal mines where their deaths warned the miners of the presence of dangerous methane gas. As a result of these earlier "canaries," we now know that we are endangered by radioactive waste and dioxin permeating the food chain. Now we may learn that pollution and genetic engineering will hammer two more nails into our collective coffin.

As an individual and as a veteran, there is something that you can do. Based upon your experiences, send ANY information that you think might be relevant in educating the public to Ray Parrish at MCMC, 59 E. Van Buren, #1400, Chicago IL 60605.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

Where We Came From Who We Are, Who Can Join

Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc. (VVAW) is a national veterans organization that was founded in New York City in 1967 after six Vietnam vets marched together in a peace demonstration. It was organized to voice to the growing opposition among returning servicemen and women to the still raging war in Indochina, and grew rapidly to a membership of over 30,000 throughout the United States as well as active duty GIs stationed in Vietnam. Through ongoing actions and grassroots organization, VVAW exposed the ugly truth about US involvement in Southeast Asia and our first-hand experiences helped many other Americans to see the unjust nature of that war.

VVAW quickly took up the struggle for the rights and needs of veterans. In 1970, we started the first rap groups to deal with traumatic after effects of war, setting the example for readjustment counselling at Vet Centers now. We exposed the shameful neglect of many disabled vets in VA Hospitals and helped draft legislation to improve educational benefits and create job programs. VVAW fought for amnesty for war resisters including vets with bad discharges. We helped make known the negative health effects of exposure to chemical defoliants and the VA's attempts to cover-up these conditions as well as their continued refusal to provide treatment and compensation for many Agent Orange Victims.

Today our government is still financing and arming undemocratic and repressive regimes around the world. Recently American troops have been sent into combat in the Middle East and Central America, for many of the same misguided reasons that were used to send us to South East Asia. Meanwhile many veterans are still denied justice-facing unemployment, discrimination, homelessness, post traumatic stress disorder and other health problems while already inadequate services are being cut back or eliminated.

We believe that service to our country and communities did not end when we were discharged. We remain committed to the struggle for peace and for social and economic justice for all people. We will continue to oppose senseless military adventures and to teach the real lessons of the Vietnam War. We will do all we can to prevent another generation from being put through a similar tragedy and we will continue to demand dignity and respect for veterans of all eras. This is real patriotism and we remain true to our mission. JOIN US!

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INSIGNIA

U.S. Military Assistance Command (MACV) [official design by the Institute of Heraldry, U.S. Army]. Under this insignia 60,000 Americans and 2 million Vietnamese died.

"Yellow and red are the Vietnam colors. The red Ground alludes to the infiltration and aggression from beyond the embattled yellow "wall", (i.e. The Great Wall of China). The opening in the wall through which this infiltration and aggression flow is blocked by the white sword representing United States military aid and support. The wall is arched and the sword pointed upward in reference to the offensive action pushing the aggression back."

It was first issued to the 12,000 "advisors" in Vietnam in March of 1963

INSIGNIA OF VIETNAM VETS AGAINST THE WAR

We took the MACV patch as our own, replacing the wall with the upside-down rifle with helmet, the international symbol of Soldiers killed in action. This was done to expose the lies and hypocrisy of U.S. aggression in Vietnam as well as its cost in human lives. As with all the propaganda put out by the government to justify U.S. intervention in Indochina, the MACV insignia also put forward lies. The U.S. military was not protecting the Vietnamese from invasion from the People's Republic of China, but was instead trying to "save" Vietnam from itself and for our exploitation.
Our insignia has come to represent veterans fighting against new "adventures" like the Vietnam War, while at the same time fighting for a decent way of life for veterans and their families.
Our insignia is 20 years old. It belongs to VVAW and no other organization or group may use for any reason without permission.

Fighting for Veterans, Peace & Justice since 1967
National Office
P.O. Box 408594
Chicago, IL 60640

Membership Form

Vietnam Veterans Against the War,Inc.
National Office
P.O. Box 408594, Chicago, Il. 60640

Membership Application

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Dates of Service (if applicable) _____
Branch _____
Unit _____
Overseas Duty _____
Dates _____
Military Occupation _____
Rank _____

Membership in VVAW is open to all people who want to build a veterans' movement that fights for peace and justice. Most of our members are veterans of Vietnam era, but we welcome veterans of all eras as well as family members and friends to our ranks. The initiation fee is $20.00, sent to the National Office (not required of homeless, unemployed or incarcerated vets).

VVAW is a democratic organization. Chapters decide on local programs and projects under the general guidelines of the national program. Chapters elect local leadership and representatives to annual national meetings where major organizational decisions are made and national coordinators elected. These coordinators are responsible for the day to day organizational leadership of VVAW and issuing national publications.

Signature _____
Date _____

(Make checks payable to VVAW. Contributions are tax deductible)

VVAW 25th ANNIVERSARY ORDER FORM

		QUANTITY	($) ITEM TOTAL
☐ Buttons (Black and Red)	$ 1.00 each		
☐ Stickers (Black on Silver Foil)	4 for $1.00		
[redacted]	[redacted]		
Black (___Small ___Large ___X-Large)			
Red (___Small ___Large ___X-Large)			
☐ 25th Anniversary Journals	$10.00 each		
☐ Frisbees	$4.00 each, 3 for $10.00		
☐ Winter Soldier Investigation (1972) videotape	$25.00 each		
☐ Free Fire Zone—Short Stories by Vietnam Veterans (1973) Edited by Wayne Karlin, Basil T. Paquet and Larry Rottmann	$5.00 each		
☐ DeMilitarized Zones—Veterans After Vietnam (1976) Edited by Jan Barry and W.D. Ehrhart	$5.00 each		

SHIPPING AND HANDLING _____
ORDERS UNDER $50.00 — $2.50
ORDERS OVER $50.00 — $5.00
SPECIAL ORDERS — PLEASE INQUIRE

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Telephone—Home (_____) _____
Work (_____) _____

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC.
25th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 408594, Chicago, IL 60640
(312) 327-5756

Open Letter on Bosnia to the United Nations, President Clinton and the Congress

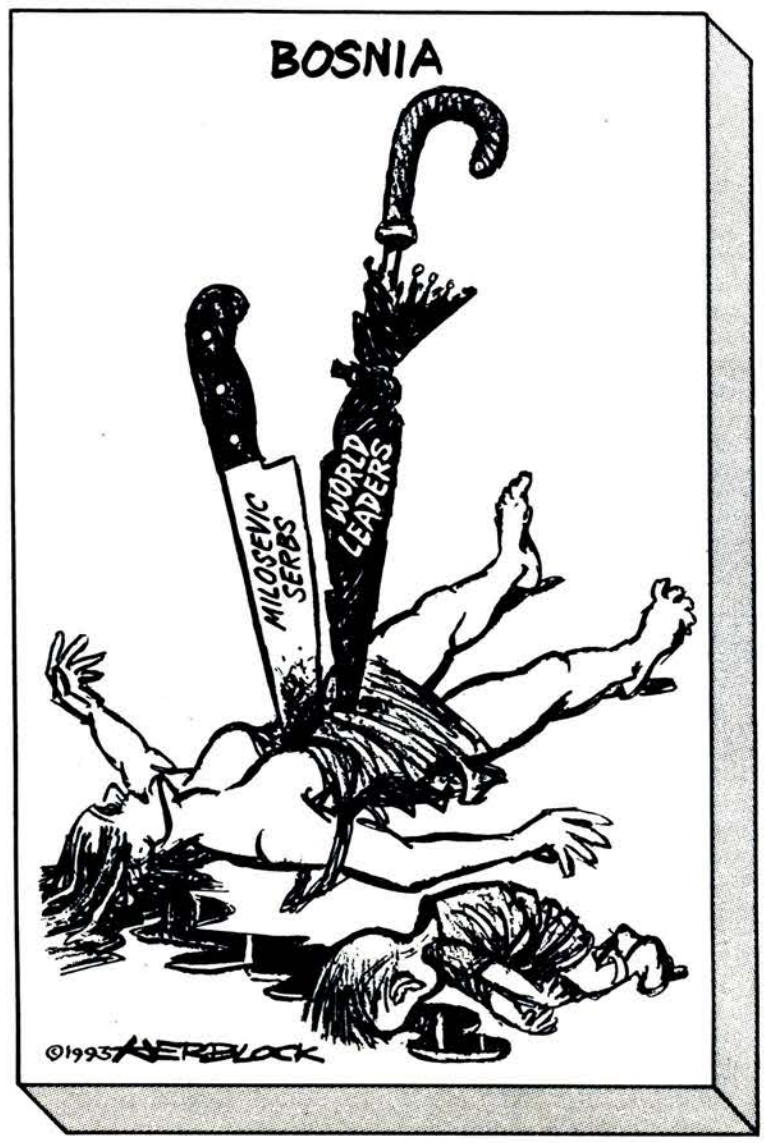
We are peace and human rights advocates who have long urged a progressive US foreign policy, and a just and democratic international order. We recognize that a lasting peace in the Balkans ultimately requires regional demilitarization. Yet this recognition must not stop us from responding now to the genocide taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina. An immediate first step should be to lift the cruel arms embargo imposed against Bosnia.

For the past fifteen months, the embargo has locked in place the unequal and unjust distribution of force that has all but destroyed Bosnia. When Yugoslavia broke up into independent states, its army, the fifth largest in Europe, did not break up with it, but remained almost entirely in Serb hands. The embargo has had little effect on the ability of the Yugoslav Army and the Serb militias to wage war in Bosnia, but has made it virtually impossible for Bosnian democratic forces to defend themselves.

In effect, the embargo has constituted an intervention on the side of the aggressor. Therefore we call for an immediate lifting of the ban on arms to the Muslim-led government of Bosnia, which has repeatedly stated its commitment to uphold a democratic, multi-ethnic society.

Simple justice demands the right of self-defense for the Bosnians, but an international peace effort could and should proceed simultaneously. This would include insistence that the Croats cease their aggression in Bosnia; support for the democratic opposition in Serbia, particularly anti-war media and organizations; vigorous prosecution of war criminals (of whom the vast majority but not all are on the Serbian side); and air-lifting humanitarian aid, under military protection, to all civilians in need.

We respect the concerns of citizens committed to peace who argue that lifting the arms embargo would only serve to further escalate the level of violence in the region and prolong the war, but we are not persuaded by them. On the contrary, we believe there are three compelling reasons to lift the embargo now.



First, lifting the embargo would not only permit the Bosnian victims of aggression to defend themselves, but could help shorten the war by letting the Serb forces know that their assaults will be met with resistance. Second, effective resistance now could help deter the spread of agression to Macedonia and Kosovo, by all reports the next intended victims in the Serbian expansionist program. Finally, ending the embargo would free the Bosnians from exclusive dependence for arms on the few suppliers so far willing to circumvent the embargo. Some of these Islamic sources may subject the Bosnians to unwelcome pressure to retreat from their goal of a democratic, secular, and multicultural state.

The United Nations, the United States, and the European Community bear a heavy responsibility for pursuing the policy of pseudo-evenhandedness that has in fact strengthened the side of aggressive Serb expansionism. It is time to admit the terrible failure of this policy, to lift the arms embargo, and give the Bosnian government a chance to survive.

Please join the list of signatories. Mail your name and profession or affiliation to: Joanne Landy, Suite 1458, 163 Joralemon St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201. Tel. (212) 666-4001. Fax (212) 662-5892.

Barry Romo *WAW*
NATIONAL COORDINATOR

Bill Branson *WAW*
NATIONAL STAFF

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Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Frankfurt City Ministry for Multicultural Affairs (Germany)
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Jonathan Fine
Michael Foot, British Labour Party
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Adrian Hastings, Department of Theology, University of Leeds
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Jennifer Scarlott, peace activist
Peter Weiss
Kenton Worcester, Social Science Research Council

Affiliations for identification purposes only.

Video Review

"Out of the Night," a TV special based on a book of the same title by William Mahedy, will have a major national play on this Memorial Day weekend. The film documentary focuses on the experiences of Vietnam vets during and after their tour "in country." The special, produced by JGT Media Productions in cooperation with KOMO-TV (in Seattle) and The Religious Broadcasting Commission, will be offered for local broadcast in TV markets across the country. According to J. Graley Taylor, the Seattle-based filmmaker who wrote, filmed, and edited the hour-long film, local vet organizations and church groups will be invited to sponsor and promote the broadcasts. A local coordinator is being sought for each of the TV markets targeted for these broadcasts.

"Out of the Night" tells the physical, emotional and spiritual journeys of 25 vets who fought in Vietnam. They lost their faith, struggled with posttraumatic stress, and fought to regain both health and faith. It's a powerful story of their journey 'out of the night.'

"Out of the Night" was filmed in seven states across the country. Vets from all over the United States share their story. Segments include interviews with John Fergueson, an Episcopal priest; Barry Romo, national coordinator for Vietnam Veterans Against the War; Steve Tice, now a counselor at American Lake Medical Center near Tacoma, WA; Walter Capps, who teaches a popular class on the Vietnam War at the University of California/Santa Barbara; Jack Lyon, who worked with author Mahedy at the San Diego Veterans' Center; and Victor Westphall, of Angel Fire, NM, who built the first Vietnam memorial after he lost his son in Vietnam.

Funding in part was provided by American Baptists; Episcopal Church, Office of Communications; Mennonite Board of Missions; Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Communications; United Methodist Communications; KOMO-TV, Seattle and many concerned individuals and congregations. KOMO-TV also provided extensive post production support.

Prior to the Memorial Day weekend play, promotional premiere showings are being planned in various cities. Churches and vet groups interested in sponsoring these presentations should contact Graley Taylor at (206)-441-6110. An audiovisual version (without commercials and with a license for public educational use) is also available. Rental is $25.00. The sale price is $50.00. For a flyer on the film, write or call JGT Media Productions, 500 Wall Street, Suite 415, Seattle, WA 98121; phone same as above.

"Out of the Night," based on a book by the same title by William Mahedy, tells the physical, emotional and spiritual journey of twenty -five vets who fought in Vietnam. They lost their faith, struggled with post traumatic stress, and fought to regain both health and faith! It's a powerful story of their journey 'out of the night!'

"Out of the Night" was filmed in seven states across the country. Vets from all over the United States share their story including Episcopal priest **John Fergueson, Barry Romo,** national coordinator for Vietnam Veterans Against the War, **Jack Lyon,** who worked with author Mahedy at the San Diego Veteran's Center, and **Steve Tice,** now a counselor at American Lake Medical Center. Others in the film are **Walter Capps,** who teaches a popular class on the Vietnam War at the University of California at Santa Barbara; and **Victor Westphall,** of Angel Fire, NM, who built the first Vietnam memorial after he lost his son in Vietnam. The film concludes at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Produced by JGT Media Productions in cooperation with KOMO-TV and the Religious Broadcasting Commission
A film by J. Graley Taylor

"Out of the Night" is available for broadcast in your area. It's also available in video - VHS format in an Audio Visual version (You are free to use it with groups)
47 minutes, in color, Sale - $50.00
For information write or call:
JGT Media Productions
500 Wall Street, Suite 415
Seattle WA 98121 * 206-441-6110